Japanese Fairy Tale Series, No. 12.

THE CUB'S TRIUMPH.

Told in English by Mrs. J. H. James.

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野干の手柄

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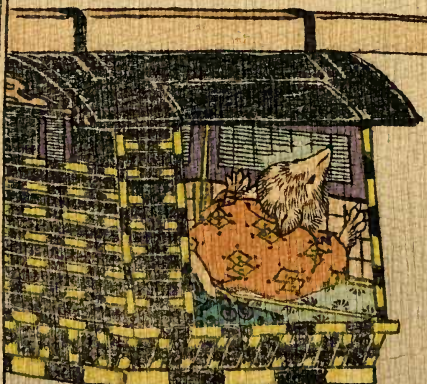

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THE

CUB'S TRIUMPH.

ONCE upon a time there lived in a forest, a badger, and a mother fox with one little cub.

There were no other beasts in the wood, because the hunters had killed them all with bows and arrows, or by setting snares.

The deer, and the wild boar, the hares, the weasels and the stoats even the bright little squirrels had been shot, or had fallen into traps. At last, only the badger, and the fox, with her young one were left. And they were starving, for they dared not venture from their holes for fear of the traps.

They did not know what to do, or where to turn for food. At last the badger said,

"I have thought of a plan. I will pretend to be dead. You

must change yourself into a man. and take me into the town, and sell me. With the money you get for me

you must buy food, and bring it into the forest. When I get a chance, I will run away, and come back to you, and we will eat our dinner together. Mind you wait for me, and don't eat any of it until I come. Next week it will be your turn to be dead, and my turn to sell, do you see?"

The fox thought this plan would do very well: so, as soon as the badger had lain down, and pretended to be dead, she said to her little cub,

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"Be sure not to come out of the hole until I come back. Be very good and quiet, and I will soon bring you some nice dinner."

She then changed herself into a woodcutter,

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took the badger by the heels, and swung him over her shoulders, and trudged off into the town. There she sold the badger for a fair

price, and with the money bought some fish, some *tofu** and some vegetables. She then ran back to the forest as fast as she could, changed herself into a fox again, and crept into her hole to see if little cub was all right. Little cub was there, safe enough, but very hungry, and

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* *Curd made from white beans.*

wanted to begin upon the *tofu* at once.

"No, no," said the mother fox.

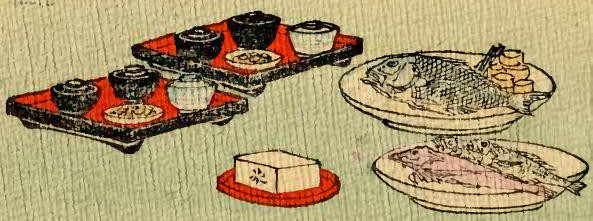
"Fair play's a jewel. We must wait for the badger"

Soon the badger arrived, quite out of breath with running so fast.

"I hope you haven't been eating any of the dinner," he panted. "I could not get away sooner. The man you sold me to, brought his wife to look at me, and boasted how cheap

he had bought me. You should have asked twice as much. At last they left me alone, and then I jumped up, and ran away as fast as I could."

The badger, the fox and the cub now sat down to dinner, and had a fine feast, the badger taking care to get the best bits for himself.



Some days after, when all the food was finished, and they had begun to get hungry again, the badger said to the fox;

"Now 'tis your turn to die." So the fox pretented to be dead, and the badger changed himself into a hunter, shouldered the fox, and went off to the town, where he made a good bargain, and sold her for a nice little sum of money.

You have seen already that the badger was greedy and selfish. What do you think he did now?

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He wished to have all the money, and all the food it would buy for himself, so, he whispered to the man who had bought the fox.

"That fox is only pretending to be dead; take care he dosn't run away."

"We'll soon settle that," said the man: and he knocked the fox on the head with a big stick, and killed her.

The badger next laid out the money in buying all the nice things he could think of. He carried them

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off to the forest, and there eat them all up himself, without giving one bit to the poor little cub, who was all alone, crying for

its mother, very sad, and very hungry.

Poor little motherless cub! But being a clever little fox, he soon began to put two and two together, and at last felt quite sure that the badger had, in some way, caused the loss of his mother.

He made up his mind that he would punish the badger; and as he was not big enough, or strong enough, to do it by force, he was obliged to try another plan.

He did not let the badger see

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how angry he was with him, but said in a friendly way.

"Let us have a game of changing ourselves into men. If you can change yourself so cleverly that I cannot find you out, you will have won the game; but, if I change myself so that you cannot find me out, then I shall have won the game. I will begin, if you like; and, you may be sure, I shall turn myself into somebody very grand while I am about it."

The badger agreed. So then,

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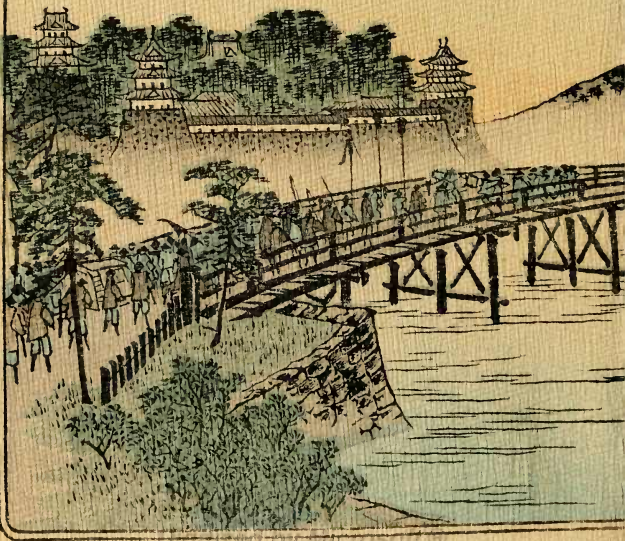
instead of changing himself at all, the cunning little cub just went and hid himself behind a tree, and watched to see what would happen. Presently, there came along the



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bridge, leading into the town, a *daimio*, seated in a *norimono*, a great crowd of servants and men at arms following him.

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The badger was quite sure that this must be the fox; so, he ran up to the *norimono*, put in his head, and cried. "I've found you

out! I've won the game!"

"A badger! A dadger! Off with his head," cried the *daimio*.

So one of the retainers cut off the badger's head with one blow of his sharp sword. The little cub, all the time laughing unseen behind the tree.

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